



Open Book Therapy

Helping you write your story...

Open Book Therapy
4124 North Lincoln Avenue Suite #1-C
Chicago IL 60618
Phone: (872) - 216 - 6131
Fax: (872) - 241 - 0100
Personal Email: dannelkecounseling@gmail.com
Office Email: kyla@openbooktherapychi.com
Website: www.openbooktherapychi.com

Tuesday January 2, 2024

The Hon. Mark G Mastroianni
United States Courthouse
300 State Street, Suite 120
Springfield, Massachusetts 01105

To The Hon. Mark G Mastroianni:

My name is Kyla R. Dannelke, MA, LCPC, I am a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and hold a master's in counseling psychology from Adler University. I am writing you regarding my work with Herbert R. Wright III, date of birth - October 10, 1995. I have had an ongoing therapeutic rapport with Mr. Wright since May 8, 2019.

During my sessions with Mr. Wright, we have discussed at length several symptoms and maladaptive coping mechanisms that he has experienced over the course of his life dating back to as early as the age of nine (9). Mr. Wright has reported trouble waking up in the morning, being able to fall asleep at night and sleep more than 2 to 3 hours at a time and feeling in fear for his life when he is asleep. Mr. Wright continues to report increased irritability, feelings of anxiety related to safety due to his exposure to extreme violence from a young age. During sessions Mr. Wright was also able to reflect on how childhood and early adulthood created a negative cycle resulting in poor decision making, as well as acting out of fear and anger, and a difficulty with being able to maintain meaningful relationships due to lack of trust.

Mr. Wright reports that his symptoms are making it difficult for him to work to his full potential as he has difficulty with concentration and emotional regulation. Most notably, Mr. Wright also reports an increase in paranoid thoughts and feelings related to safety when traveling alone or even with friends, due to threats he has received towards himself and his family. When client is forced to travel, he experiences feelings of panic and even having memories and flashbacks triggered relating to the extreme violence he witnessed from a young age. Some of these flashbacks are relating to witnessing a murder at the age of 9-years-old, which he was never offered any counseling or therapeutic services to help him process this very emotionally and psychologically damaging event in his young life. As we have learned from research about PTSD, trauma can literally change the biology and structure of the brain. Most notably impacting the amygdala which triggers the bodies "alarm system", which may have impacted how Mr. Wright viewed different situations in his life and causing him to believe that he needed to do anything to keep himself safe from harm.



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In addition to the impact to the amygdala, it should also be taken into consideration the other possible changes in other parts of the brain's decision making systems. Due Mr. Wright's complex history of PTSD and the research on PTSD's impact on the brain's prefrontal cortex, which can be considered his "brake system". There is reason to believe that the development of that "brake system" could be severely delayed, as new research shows, up until the age of 35-years-old inside of the typical age of 25. This would make it incredibly difficult for Mr. Wright to make clear and logical decisions during some of the most formative times in his life – while also attempting to honor his bodies "alarm system" that was telling him to do whatever he could to keep himself safe.

Following the guidelines of the DSM-5, Mr. Wright meets the criteria for the following diagnoses:

- (F43.10) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Chronic
- (Z91.49) Other Personal History of Psychological Trauma
- (F43.81) Prolonged Grief Disorder
- (F63.81) Intermittent Explosive Disorder
- (F12.20) Cannabis Dependence, Severe
- (F13.10) Sedative, Hypnotic or anxiolytic abuse, in remission

It is my clinical observation from my work with Mr. Wright, that from the time he began witnessing and being subjected to extreme violence at the age of 9-years-old, Mr. Wright essentially had his "brakes cut". This delay in emotional development has led him to make decisions that I don't believe that the now 28-years-old and devoted father of three would make. Consistently during our time together, Mr. Wright has spoken at length in sessions about his passion for empowering the youth of Chicago. Dating back to as early as our first session together, Mr. Wright highlighted his desire created safe havens for adolescents and young adults and to help them make better choices for their future. This is including but not limited to purchasing a building to transform into a place where adolescents and young adults can explore their interest in the arts and music, as well as building the "Swervin' Through Stress" outreach network for mental health in some of the most underprivileged areas in Chicago, IL. He has also shared in sessions his deep hope and desire that his children not follow in his path. Mr. Wright has expanded on that by discussing why he has made a very conscious choice to split time between his different residences that way they are exposed to more diversity in their lives but also equally not exposed to the same level of harmful events that could impact them socially, psychologically, or emotionally.



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After meeting with Mr. Wright and building a therapeutic rapport with him during our work together, I would strongly recommend continuing to attend therapeutic sessions to help reduce his reported symptoms, such as disturbed sleep, irritability, feelings of anxiety, intermittent angry outbursts, and inability to maintain interpersonal relationships. Recommended treatment is one session per week with treatment length being determined by the client's continued progress in individual sessions. Frequency and length will continue to be reevaluated as appropriate. Mr. Wright has made it apparent in our work together that he has a deep commitment to not only healing himself to help him make better decisions and choices in the future. But, also showing his deep commitment to changing the society we live in, so that future adolescents who are put on a similar course in life can have access to making better choices and having better outcomes for their lives.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at the email or telephone number listed below.

Respectfully,

Kyla R. Dannelke, MA, LCPC.
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor
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